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EPA report: Radiological wastes contained at West Lake Landfill

Greta Weiderman
Reporter- St. Louis Business Journal

A March aerial survey released today by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency found that the radiologically-contaminated wastes buried at the West Lake Landfill in Bridgeton in the 1970s are contained within fenced areas of the Superfund site.

A pilot, co-pilot, technician and scientific equipment on board an airplane flew multiple low-altitude passes over the site to identify surface areas that emit gamma radiation.

The waste does not pose a public health risk, according to the EPA report.

“A person would have to illegally trespass onto the site to be exposed to elevated levels of radiation,” EPA Regional Administrator Karl Brooks said in a statement.

The 200-acre site includes two areas where leached barium sulfate waste from World War II-era nuclear weapons manufacturing was buried in the 1970s; and the separate Bridgeton Sanitary Landfill.

The survey was done as EPA officials reconsider the final remedy selected for cleaning up the site. Groundwater sampling is expected to be complete by the end of this year.

Republic Services Inc.’s Bridgeton Landfill is about 1,200 feet south of the West Lake Landfill EPA Superfund site, and the company has begun work to move underground concrete pipes to reduce the foul-smelling gases that are escaping from the Bridgeton Landfill.

Citizens had expressed concern that the fire burning underground at Republic Services’ Bridgeton Landfill could reach the radioactive waste.

The EPA has scheduled a public meeting June 25 to discuss the survey results and plans for further investigation of the West Lake Landfill. The meeting is set for 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Pattonville High School in Maryland Heights.